



We're Focused on Your Future!

Otero Junior College
President's Report
August 2021
Timothy Alvarez, Ph.D.

Transform the Student Experience

On August 1, student-athletes from Men's and Women's Soccer and the Volleyball teams arrived on Campus. Even though we have minimal COVID restrictions at the moment, our residence hall managers took ideas from last year that made the move in process smoother. The students were checked in by team/cohort and at different times throughout the day. There are 317 students living in the residence halls this year.

Courses started on August 16 and are in full swing. This semester, there are several different modalities of learning occurring. In-person, hybrid as well as online. Otero hopes to be able to continue holding courses in-person and as such is requiring face coverings for the first couple weeks of courses.

Some of the Welcome Week events that took place were participation in the Arkansas Valley Fair Parade and the upcoming Early Settlers Day Parade, where students and staff hand out candy and sports schedules to the community. A Welcome Back BBQ that was held the Sunday before classes for students, parents, and employees of Otero as a meet and greet, a movie night on the basketball courts outside, "Get the Scoop" with the Dean, Trivia & Tacos, Otero Would "Succ" Without You (potting succulent plants), Loaded Baked Potato & Bingo and a Flavored Lemonade Stand.

Create Education without Barriers through Transformational Partnerships

The BUENO-HEP/HSE Program recently graduated seven students. On July 28, a ceremony was held to recognize and celebrate the students who received their High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate. Five students and their families were able to attend the event which was held at The Fairway restaurant outside of La Junta. The HSE Certificate is an alternative to earning a High School Diploma and is granted by the Department of Education for the State of Colorado upon successful completion of one of the three testing programs, GED, TASC or HiSET.

The July 2021 BUENO-HEP/HSE graduates were:

- Nemesis Goodman
- Ashley Hauptman
- Monaco Lopez
- Esmeralda Perez-Ochoa
- Christopher Rodriguez
- Alexis Marie Thomas
- Joshua Tait Trujillo

Nathan Howell, Program Coordinator, had nothing but great things to say about this class. He shared that they were incredibly driven and showed great perseverance. He expects great things from this group. Several of the students from this year's class will continue their education at Otero College.



Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

Sarah Droege joined Otero on August 4, 2021, as the new Mental Health Counselor. Sarah has a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from the University of Denver and a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Northern Colorado. Most recently, she worked for Bent County Correctional Facility as a Mental Health Coordinator. Sarah has been involved in many clinical experiences and diverse program development both domestically and abroad. She has an enthusiasm for the mental health field and a passion to reach underserved and young adult populations. Sarah is committed to increasing access and resources for Otero students.

Dr. Kimberly Munro joined Otero August 10, 2021, as the Faculty Professional Development Lead for the AIM Grant. Kimberly has a Master of Science in Geographic Information Science from Florida State University and a Doctor of Philosophy from

Louisiana State University in Geography and Anthropology. Most recently, she worked as an instructor for Pike's Peak Community College and as an Affiliate Faculty at Metropolitan State University. Kimberly co-coordinated an Archaeology Field School for an archeological dig with Trinidad State and Otero students at the JE Canyon Ranch. She has experience in planning research projects, workshops and field camps, and grant management. Dr. Munro understands the importance of connecting with students, especially in rural environments.

Traci Johnson joined Otero as a new Math Faculty on August 10, 2021. Traci has a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Math Education from Adams State University and a Master of Science in Teaching and Learning from Colorado State University-Global Campus. Her most recent role was at La Junta Junior/Senior High as a High School Math Teacher and Department Chair. She has over ten years of teaching experience, including five years of teaching dual-credit courses with Otero. Traci loves to engage with students and wants to enhance the learning experience for our student population.

Johnny Adame transitioned from his role as assistant men's soccer coach to interim women's head soccer coach. He has worked at Otero for the past two years. Before Otero, he coached soccer at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. He also has worked with the soccer program at Fort Hays State University and Neosho County Community College. Johnny has experience coaching high school teams and as a game day operator/player relations and athletic director. He has a master's degree in Health and Human Performance from Fort Hays State University and a bachelor's degree from Missouri Southern State University.

Faculty and staff had a Welcome Back BBQ on Friday, August 13. It was a time for fellowship as a lot of our group had not physically seen each other in several months. There was food, games, and a raffle drawing for Otero gear. Cabinet members served food and grilled the burgers and hot dogs.

